1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

visitor to be overwhelmed with little presents of food. I have been presented within half an hour, in one house, with five calabashes of chocolate, at least half-a-dozen quarts of chicha, a dozen or more ears of green corn, and a dozen ripe bananas. The little boys, with whom I made friends, fared sumptuously, for it wasn't polite for me to refuse anything.

The houses of the Bri-bris are usually circular, from thirty to fifty feet in diameter, and about the same in height. They are composed of long poles, reaching from the ground to the apex. These rest on a ring of withes or vines, tied in bundles, eight or ten inches thick, and resting on a series of upright crotched posts, set in the ground in a circle about a third smaller than the outer circumference of the house. Above this ring, if the house is large, are one or two more, according to its size, not resting on posts, but tied to the sloping poles. The whole is thickly thatched with palm leaves, and finished at the apex by an old earthen jar, to stop the leaks. There is but one aperture to the house, and this is a large, squarely cut door, left on one side. Over the door there is sometimes made a little shed, to keep the rain out. The interior is always very dark. Sometimes, among the Bri-bris, instead of building the house in a circular form, it is elongated and has a ridge-pole, but the ends are rounded, and the door is in one of the ends.

Formerly the Cabecar houses were built in the same style; but now most of them are mere sheds, sloping to one side only and open at the ends and in front. The most pretentious house I saw in Cabecar was a roof sloping to both sides from a ridge pole to the ground, but open at both ends. The Tiribi houses are simply a roof raised on short posts, sloping both ways from the ridge but open all around below. Mr. Lyon told me that formerly the Tiribis as well as the Cabecars had round houses like the Bri-bris, but that the present style is due only to carelessness. The tribes are dwindling so rapidly that they seem to have lost heart even in so important a thing as building comfortable houses; and are content to put up with any make-shift that will shelter them from the weather. The Bri-bri houses are not only better constructed but are much better furnished than those of their neighbors. Beds are placed around the house in the space between the posts and the sloping sides. These are made by planting in the ground two sticks, forked at the upper ends; cross-sticks are laid on these, the other ends being lashed with vines to the sloping rafters. Over these two horizontal sticks are placed boards made of the outer shell of a species of palm; or wild cane is lashed close together. In front of the beds are slung hammocks, between the posts, or to the ends of horizontal sticks projecting a little beyond them. The fire is placed opposite the door near the back side of the house. It is kept up by placing close together, the ends of three large logs which are pushed up as they burn off. Over the fire is a barbacoa or frame, sufficiently high to let people pass under it. On it is placed food to keep it out of the way of the dogs, pigs, chickens, and ants. The smoke of the fire is sufficient protection from the latter

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

protection from the latter. Back of the fire-place are ranged the chicha jars, two or three in number. Being round bottomed, they stand on the floor propped up by stones. Scattered around the house are stools or benches, rarely more than six inches high, each carved out of a solid block of wood. They generally have four feet, though occasionally a small, roughly made one is seen, with but two feet, and which is only kept in upright position when somebody is sitting on it. The pots and kettles about the fire are all of American cast iron, and vary in size from less than a quart to ten gallons capacity. Hanging from the barbacue over the smoke, is generally seen a cocoanut shell or a leaf bundle full of salt. It is kept here because it is the only place where it will remain dry. Suspended from the roof are baskets of from one to three cubic feet capacity. They are usually made of a peculiar, very hard, and very flexible vine. These are the trunks of the people, and in them are kept their clothing and all of their little personal treasures and ornaments. They are also used for storing corn or other seeds, like beans, the basket being then lined with leaves to prevent spilling. The women also use them for carrying water calabashes. These are either gourds or the shells of the fruit of the calabash tree, with a small round hole cut in one end. One other use of the baskets is to carry loads when the net bags are scarce. These nets are also often suspended about the house in the same manner as the baskets. Axes, always of the make of Collins, of Connecticut, and long machetes, either of this or of some inferior make, are to be found in every house. Collins' hardware has gained a permanent reputation among these people, who will give twice as much for a leather handled machete of this brand, as for any other kind. Of other tools, the most noteworthy is a heavy stick sharpened to a chisel edge at one end and beveled on one side. This is used for making holes in planting corn or plantain sprouts, and the edge is used to beat down high grass. It works almost as effectually as a scythe. Hooked sticks for lifting the iron kettles, others cut with short radiating branches at the end, like a five or six pointed star, for stirring chocolate, and paddles for stirring food are always found near the fire. Calabashes and gourds with small holes cut in one end for water bottles, and other calabashes cut in half for drinking cups, are also found in every house. Food usually, and even drink sometimes, are served in leaves, called in Spanish "platanillo," smaller and tougher, but otherwise resembling those of the plantain. These are dexterously folded so as to hold a quart or more of fluid without spilling.

Of arms, besides the inevitable machete and very good double-barreled guns, they possess bows made of a very tough kind of palm wood. They are straight and usually about five feet long. The string is made of the finer kind of *agave* fibre. The arrows are of three kinds. All have a butt two and a half to three feet long, made from the light flower stalk of the wild cane. This is a mass of pith, with a thin hard shell on the outside, giving the requisite stiffness. They are not feathered. The

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

342 angular roof of thatched plantain leaves. These lodges vary from twenty to forty feet in length, averaging thirty feet, and from the ground to the apex of the roof-ridge they are eight to ten feet high. In general appearance they closely resemble the houses of the Florida Seminole, but usually lack the sleeping platforms of the latter (pl. 1).

Some houses are provided with floors about four feet from the ground, which generally are made of splints of palm or other wood, lashed with lianas to a framework of beams. Such floors afford an uncertain and yielding footing to a heavy person. Generally the floor covers only a portion of the ground area, an open space being left at one end to accommodate the fireplace, which is situated on the hard-beaten earth. The raised floor is reached by a short, log ladder, the steps of which are closely spaced notches. [352] Hammocks of native make swing from post to post across the lodge above this floor. Sometimes the floor is encompassed by a loose wall of sticks, set up vertically and [231] bound together, the intervening space be-

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

412 of fresh meal were seen on its surface. A similar bowlder mortar may be seen in the foreground in pl. I.

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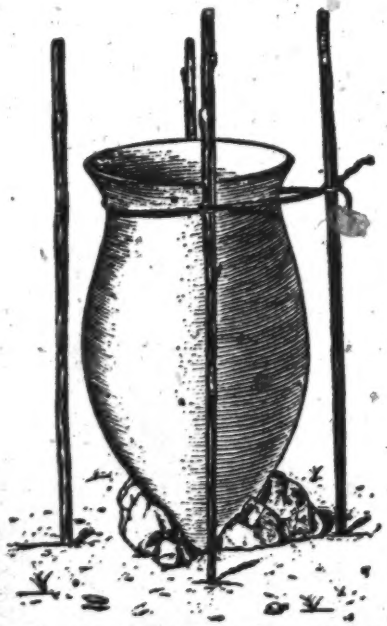

FIG. 1.—Method of supporting a chicha jar.

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354 In the two circular houses of chiefs that still remained, the arrangement of household furnishings was more promiscuous, but in

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

both cases the fireplace was opposite the door, near the side, and not in the middle. 342 352 [354]

From the beams and the roof of the ordinary Bribri house are suspended carrying bags and baskets in which are stored calabashes and other utensils, while bows, arrows, and blowguns are held in crude racks or stuck in the thatch. Under the angle of the roof is often a rude attic, made of rough-hewn plank flooring, on which rests one or more great, cylindrical, corn receptacles, or granaries, of bark, and nearby one is likely to see a string or two of braided corn.

Sometimes a long, goblet-shaped, wooden drum, with an iguana-skin head, a number of circular pieces of iguana-skin for fresh drum-heads, or a cluster of several drums, may swing from a rafter at one side; or one may observe plumes of macaws, and the paws, flesh, or skin of jaguars and armadillos, hanging freely or tucked in a woven *chákara*, or bag, to be used as medicine. Again, but rarely, these may be accompanied with a shaman's small gourd rattle with a bone handle. Tame parrots, parra- 352 534 000

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

231 Tame parrots, parrakeets, macaws, and other birds, or mammals, such as monkeys, screech at the visitor from a safe retreat in the rafters, and there is always a host of dogs to guard against.

342 Another, now uncommon, type of lodge is oval or round, a trifle larger and flatter than the form described. Its outer wall is only about four feet high, loosely built of sticks set up vertically and tied together. This type of lodge is light inside, but its sides are not tight; it has no raised floor, and no smoke-hole. The kitchen is always some distance from the door, and though never in the center of the building, is often at the end opposite from the entrance.

352 516 [532] In all the forms of lodges observed, there are many four-legged stools, sometimes roughly carved to imitate tortoises, and very long benches. The Bribri, when at home, never squat on the bare ground like their North American relatives, but each member of the family, including the youngest child, has his own seat.

342 The last type of Bribri house to be mentioned is the most striking. It is called today a "*palenque*," or "king's house," by

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

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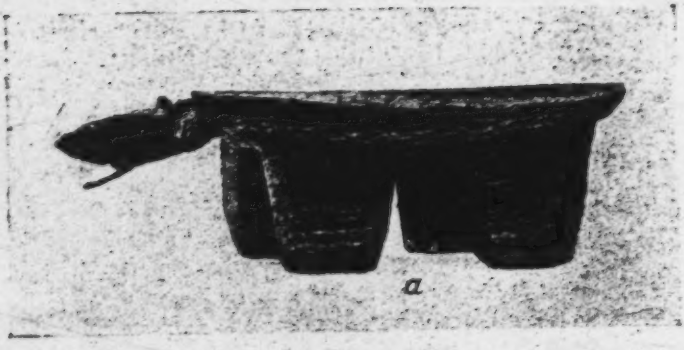

STOOLS CARVED TO REPRESENT THE TORTOISE

(Length: a, 11"; b, 12¾")

[Facing p. 53]

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

the natives. In the spring of 1917 only two examples were to be found, and one of these had been abandoned and was falling into decay. These houses are great conical structures, about a hundred feet in circumference, consisting of thatched walls rising from the ground to a sharp point, forty or fifty feet above, which is capped by an inverted kettle to prevent leakage during inclement weather (pl. II). The doorway is high enough to admit a man without stooping, and is protected by a roofed but sideless vestibule. Inside all is dark, for no light is admitted except through the door, and the interior is thoroughly smoke-blackened. A rectangular platform, about ten feet square, made of puncheons supported by vertical beams, supports the bark granaries and some pottery vessels, together with a small supply of pounded clay for blowgun pellets. The sides are festooned with weapons and utensils, while pigs enter freely and root about among the stools and benches. Piles of palm-leaves around the sides indicate beds. We were told that

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2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

is shown in pl. III, from a photograph kindly furnished by Prof. M. H. Saville. 482

Drying platforms for cacao, and outside granaries, built close to the houses, are found everywhere. 343

Gardens.—Many Bribri lodges are surrounded by yards enclosed with small bough fences, within which nothing is grown; but every home has its small banana or plantain plantation and its grove of cacao trees, sometimes very large and old, with occasional lime trees or yampi plants. These trees usually grow close to the dwelling, and often surround it. Corn fields are commonly seen, and calabash trees are always in evidence. Cotton plants, growing either singly or in small clumps, are sometimes found near the houses. 241

Household Utensils.—As above stated, every member of a family is provided with a low stool or seat, hewn from a block of wood. These seats (fig. 2) are round, square, or oblong, and the long, round, tapering legs of some examples suggest the stone metates found at Las Mercedes. There can be no doubt that the custom of 352 171

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

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using stools is an ancient one in Costa Rica, and that these seats seem to be but degenerate survivals of elaborately carved stone stools, such as those taken from the graves at Las Mercedes and Anita Grande. They may bear some relation to the *duhos* of the West Indies.

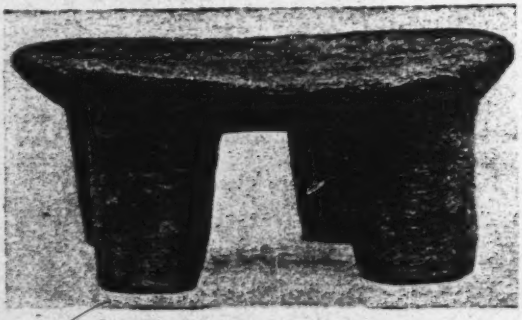

FIG. 2.—Wooden stool (length 13¼ in.).

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The writer was fortunate enough to obtain some modern Bribri seats crudely hewn to represent tortoises (pl. IV), while one example had, instead of the usual legs, supports of wood carved in crudely rectangular figures (fig. 3) that recall the fine stone lattice-work found in the graves.

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

The seats vary in size from diminutive forms used by children to benches six to ten feet long, narrow, with square ends and clumsy feet. Some of the children's seats have been used as toys. Pl. IV, *a*, illustrating a seat shaped like a turtle, still has about the neck a portion of the fiber string by which its little owner dragged it about;

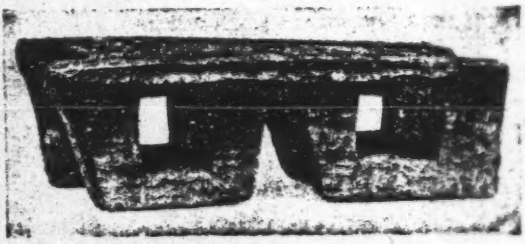

FIG 3.—Stool with unusual supports (length 13¾ in.).

and, to add to the realism of its play, the child had also fitted the ill-smelling carapace of a freshly killed tortoise of the family *Chelydra* over the top of this stool.

Hammocks and Beds.—Large, handsomely netted hammocks of string made from native fibers are often used for sleeping, each member of the family having his own. They are

2:Skinner E-[illegible]17) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

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made usually in two sizes, only both of which are more capacious than ours. A large example in the collection of the Museum is made in coarse diagonal net, the strands passing over two and under two.

Especially in such houses as are provided with raised floors, one finds beds in addition to hammocks, the groundwork of which is usually a coarse, plain blanket made of a heavy bark cloth, or tapa, about a yard square.

[287]

Bags.—In abundant evidence in every house are the carrying bags, in varying sizes, consisting of coiled work without foundation, and manufactured of cotton or sisal fiber. These bags are made with bone needles, fashioned somewhat like the bone netting-needles of the Central Algonkians, and are, as Gabb says, "meshed like our fiber nets." The bags are sometimes double, one being netted within another, and are often ornamented with a few encircling, parallel bands in black or red, or both, colored with native bark dyes. The bags are called *chákara*. All are furnished with a head- or breast-strap, woven of one piece with the bag.

[412]

[482]

near the savanna known as "Mano de Tigre" today. Here, various tribes, including the *Coto* were moved into the vicinity by the Spanish priests,[8] until in 1749, even the *Quepos* Indians were brought into the area and formed part of the community.[9]

PRESENT GROUPS

Boruca were at one time neighbors and, to some extent at least, enemies. The *Boruca* today include the *Coto*, *Turrucaca*, *Burucac*, *Quepos*, and the *Abubaes*.[10]

LANGUAGE

speech he also sees a resemblance to the *Boruca*.[12]

In connection with the name, *Boruca*, the Indians today do not use this term, but call themselves *Brunka*. *Brunka* is composed of two words, *brun*, meaning "ashes," and *ka* or *k-a*, meaning "within." Their town, however, they call *Boruca*. *Brunka* is singularly absent in the older documents of the Conquest and colonization, apparently coming into use around the nineteenth century.

NEIGHBORS

de Rebullida, as stated above. Here they have remained, isolated from their original territory, each group distrustful of the other. The *Boruca* distrust in particular their neighbors the *Térraba*. They get along best of all, but not very well, with the *Ujarrás*. Even within the Boruca community this isolation is evident. The women seldom visit each others' houses. As much as a year may pass without one going to the house of a neighbor, but, when they do, they are very garrulous, and enjoy gossiping and laughing, seated on their little four-footed benches.

ACCULTURATION

Bruncas, *Brunkas*, or *Borucas* began to lose their own culture and personality. The slow acculturation of these people by the Costa

also should be considered as part of this group. See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, pp. 421, 424.

[11] See Mason, 1940, pp. 86-87, and the linguistic map of Johnson, 1940.

[12] Lehmann, 1920, vol. II, p. 71.

[8] See Fernández, 1907, vol. VIII, p. 424.

[9] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 363.

342 824 used to level off the roof and to make an even finish. The third grass is thin and fine, and is called *zacate de palito*, in Spanish ("little stick grass") or *su* in Boruca. This is supposed to protect against and to stop cracks.

The Indians pull up these grasses, roots and all, and gather them in bundles which they tie with a vine or pieces of the grass itself. They put these rolls on an ox or on their own backs and take them to the building site (see fig. 7, *a*). As many as twenty-seven hundred rolls or bundles of grass are needed for an average roof. If the grass gets wet, each roll is opened and laid in the sun to dry. When ready to use, the grass is placed between one or two of the narrower horizontal poles of the roof forming a neat row. It is not tied, but is literally wedged-in. A roof usually has from six to nine horizontal rows of grass.

342 [492 492] The interior of the houses varies. Some have two partitions made of *caña blanca* (see p. 8) or even of thin *palo de mayo* poles, following the same construction as the outer walls, at times, even with a smattering of *bajareque*. When a house is so divided, one room is used for the kitchen, one for a sleeping room, and one for a living room. Occasionally, a little hallway results in this type of house. However, the hallway is only the result of the partitions and is not an architectural feature. The average house, however, has only one partition, usually of canes, which sets off the kitchen.

354 **Household Furniture.** Many of the *Boruca* have, in addition to the three hearth stones (see p. 8), a *fogón*, or stove, built in the typical *ladino* fashion. This *fogón* is a raised wooden container, rectangular in shape, and supported by four wooden legs.

The container is filled with mud mixed with pebbles or small pieces of stone and left to dry. When thoroughly dry, three or more stones are placed on top to support the cooking vessels. Sticks of wood are placed between these stones and set on fire for cooking. At times small rounded mud ovens are also made on the *fogón*.

352 The *tabanco*, or wooden platform, is an important feature of a Boruca house. The *tabancos* are usually made of the stilt or black palms called in Spanish *chonta*, or *chonta negra*. There are two kinds of *chonta*. Both have

352 aerial roots, but the one with large roots is called in Boruca *kanagira*, and the kind with smaller roots is called *mana-kra'*. These *tabancos* either hang by vines from the roof, and serve as storage places for food or other things, or they are more stable structures made with thick horizontally placed poles resting on the uppermost horizontal pole of the wall, and forming a sort of second floor or platform to be used for sleeping as well as storing. To [417] climb to this sort of *tabanco*, ladders made by notching a single pole so as to give place for footing are used.

Beds usually line the inside of the living room. These beds are made of four supporting sticks with a v-shaped upper end. The lower end is placed in the earth. The bed supports are either of wood or of *chonta*. Usually a rectangular framework of four poles is fitted on top of the vertical supports and tied to them with a vine. The bed itself may be made of cane or hide, although sometimes planks are used.

The only furnishings besides these beds are low wooden benches about an inch off the ground, and in certain houses, plain old-fashioned wooden coffers to keep clothes. These [77] coffers are purely *ladino* and have been copied from the Costa Ricans who at one time or another have settled among these Indians. The low wooden benches are pure Indian, have four feet, and are either plain or have protruding heads and often tails (fig. 7, *b–6*, *c–1*). It has been suggested that this last type is copied from the stone seats or metates of the ancients.[22] The benches are kept highly polished

[continued p. 13-B, first paragraph]

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

291 **Clothing.** Relatively few *Boruca* wear costumes. The only ones who do are the older women who wear a *manta*, or skirt (see fig. 7, *d*), and a few men who still use the woven belt (see fig. 7, *b–7*). The majority are clothed in cheap unattractive cotton dresses, [439] the cloth bought in the nearest *ladino* settlement. Besides the *manta*, the women wear a *huipil*, or blouse, which may be of any color, even white. (The word *huipil* is understood and used at times by these people. They have

[continued p. 13-B, last paragraph]

[22] Stone, 1943, p. 81.

8:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

with *chumica* (*Curatella americana* L.) leaves, 352
and are used throughout the household, in the kitchen, by the hearth fire while cooking, as a convenient seat while weaving, and as we use chairs in our houses.

There is at least one hammock in every [513]
household, although frequently two, or even three, are found hanging from the top of the walls. They are used to sleep in as well as to sit in during the day.

Habas, empty, and with foodstuffs or cloth- [412]
ing, are piled in corners or on *tabancos*. Wooden mortars, carved from a single piece of wood, and the wooden masher, are part of every household. These are for husking rice (see p. 9). Large pottery jars to keep chicha are generally found in the corner of the living room. String bags of diverse types hang on the walls with weaving implements, cotton, or thread; while also on the walls, and especially in the kitchen, hang pots dug from ancient graves (when the family is not superstitious), and always bottles of sundry types. These contain many different things, from herbs to oil and seeds. *Maracas*, occasionally masks for festivals, drums, clusters of parrot feathers, toucan beaks, ears of vari-colored corn, bright red shells from boiled crayfish, and even cock feathers are stuck at random in the walls or hang on strings from them, giving a gay appearance to the household. In [231]
certain houses, pet birds such as parakeets, parrots, and macaws are kept by clipping a wing. Instead of cages, a rack is made of pieces of wood, and kept in a corner of the household.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

forgotten their own word for it although they 291
admit having formerly had one.) This blouse is sometimes opened down the front, and sometimes closed. It has sleeves, and is fashioned with a guimpe effect at the neck, hanging loosely over the skirt (see fig. 7, *d*). Formerly, the women used a woven *huipil* which always had a white background, no sleeves, and a rectangular neck. The design consisted of stripes, either wide or narrow. The cloth was finer than that of the skirt, being the same

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949

SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

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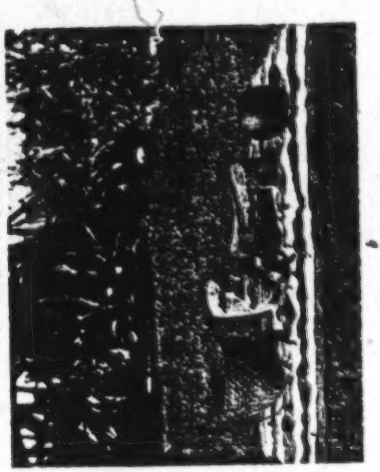

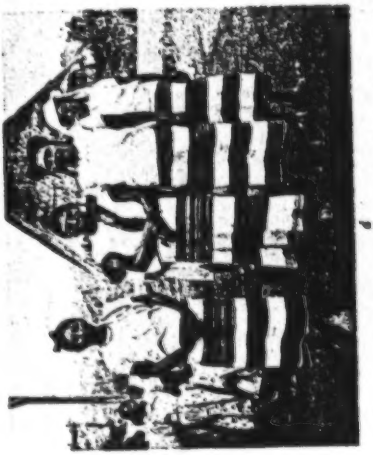

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4, On and Indian woman laden with grasses for a roof. *A*, Artifacts of the Bersua: 1, mantle or skirt; 2, hake; 3, doll; 4, *marraca* or rattles; 5, mask; 6, four-legged stool; 7, man's belt; 8, sieve. *C*, Artifacts of the Bersua: 1, four-legged stool with head and tail; 2, baskets; 3, sieve; 4, bark cloth; 5, drum. *B*, Women wearing the manta, or skirt, and blouse.

[p.57]

354 **Furnishings.** In Talamanca, Chirripó, and Cabagra the hearth is made by placing tree trunks on the dirt floor with their ends together. The fire is kept going continuously and is not extinguished but covered with ashes when the family leave. During the night, someone shoves a trunk nearer to the center as it burns. In the large houses of the Bribri, there is a hearth for each wife (figs. 4, *c*; 6, *d*). This [252] is where she cooks for herself and her children as well as her husband. No house was seen with more than two hearths among the Cabécares (fig. 4, *d*). Over these fires wooden rods are suspended from the roof beams by pieces of *burio* (*Tiliaceae* sp., *see* Fibers). From these 251 rods hangs whatever needs drying, such as meat, seeds (usually in white *bijagua* leaves but occasionally in corn shucks), salt in black [824] *bijagua* (*Calathea* spp.) leaves, cacao pods for planting, plantains or bananas for ripening, 231 etc. A piece of hide from cattle or wild game is also hung from one of the rods and is used as food for the ever-present dogs when fresh meat is lacking. Small *bavas*, made by men and 415 women from the vine called *kugaca* in Cabécar 824 and *bejuco de hombre* in Spanish, or carrying nets made by women from *guarumo* (*Cecropia* spp.) fiber, are also suspended from the rods. They contain packages of salt wrapped in *bijagua* leaves and cacao pods. Hanging ● 352 shelves, called in Spanish *tabancos*, are rarely 177 seen in the large house. The fact that in Talamanca there is no word to designate these [192] shelves, other than the Bribri *koṇ*, meaning "place," suggests that here is a borrowed item, probably from the mestizos.

353 In this type of dwelling, the roof beams are important. Almost all things necessary for the family are stuck at random between the rungs of the roof construction or are hung from them (fig. 8, *a–c*). These necessities include food such as grains and fruits; carrying nets containing dried meat and tied tight with the stem of a plantain leaf; sieves made from gourds; forked sticks for lifting cooking ves- [272] sels; sticks with a number of little branches left for stirring chocolate; wooden spoons for stirring; chicken and wild turkey bones; hunting trophies; yeast for chicha wrapped in *bijagua* leaves; net bags with clay for making blow

[192] "It is interesting to note that *kaLwa* is the word used in the upper Coen. It has a marked resemblance

1/4 [i.e. carrying baskets– ANALYST]

353 gun pellets; the necessary equipment for fishing and hunting; hen nets or nests for laying
[291] made of vine; bark containers or *havas;* reme-
[415] dies in gourds, net bags, wrapped in *bijagua* leaves, or, rarely, in bottles; tobacco leaves; bright feathers from birds, in particular the
[237] oriole and macaw; toucan bills; dried flowers; sea shells and the shells of crustaceans; animal skins for dress or for curing purposes; fibers for making rope or string; and seeds and tubers for planting.

352 513 *Cabuya* string (*see* Fibers) hammocks, made by the Bribri men and used by them and the Cabécares, are also suspended from the roofs of all houses and are for sleeping as well as resting. Instead of hammocks, sometimes leaves are placed on the ground by the fire and are used for sleeping. This is inconvenient as dogs and pigs are apt to disturb people sleeping on the floor.

352 Low tetrapod wooden stools or benches are common. These may be long, rectangular, or
[531] circular and are often decorated with a protruding head and tail. The women sit on them while cooking, or people while talking, in order not to be bothered by smoke. The
[824] benches are generally made of cedar by the men and are called *kaLwa* or *bekkegLɔ* in Cabécar and *kuLá* [77] in Bribri.

415 Close to the roof or the low wall, wooden mixing trays or wooden mortars, *havas,* and basketlike containers (*deku* in Cabécar), fre-
[824] quently lined with *bijagua* leaves to hold chicha paste, are raised on wooden supports to protect them from animals. Large earthen chicha jars with a pointed base are found in all the big circular houses of the Bribri and in some Cabécar ones (fig. 4, *c*). There is always
[439] one or more iron pots, bought in Limón or a Company commissary (fig. 6, *d*). This is true even in upper Talamanca. Here and in the remote parts of Chirripó, *bijagua* leaves fre-
[824] quently serve as plates and cups, and instead
[264] of spoons, knives and forks, the fingers are used for eating from these or from a common
[753] pot or gourd. People say that eating utensils are "dirty" and fear sickness as a result of their use.

352 177 In the smaller houses, the general furnishings are the same. As these dwellings are usually

[192] to the Bribri term *kuLá.* In this section, the two groups are in close contact.

nearer to non-Indian habitations, intrusions of other customs are evident. The hearth is sometimes raised and hanging shelves contain gourds, palm-leaf dishes sewn at the ends with vines similar to those of the Panamanian Guaymí, and often one or two knives, forks, plates, cups, etc. A pole with cut-in or notched steps is used for a ladder to reach the mezzanines which are occasionally seen in this type of house. It is significant that the Cabécares, who have had less contact with non-indigenous neighbors in the past, have no word for this ladder or mezzanine.

In the houses nearer to the Talamanca Plain and in the part of Chirripó near Moravia, an oil lamp is occasionally seen hanging by *pita* (agave thread). There is no word for lamp in either Bribri or Cabécar, but in Talamanca, the word for fire is used.

On the Pacific side of the range, at Salitre,
[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 19(B)--ANALYST]

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

Dress. Dress does not ever appear to have formed an important part of Talamanca culture. From the middle of the 17th century to the present, we can trace the use of bark cloth. In this respect, the following commentaries are of interest:

> (the Cabécares) . . . for working and in their houses dress in tree bark called in these lands Mastate, and only to go to mass or when in the presence of the priest do they dress in cotton.[78]
>
> The dresses of the Urinamas, Cavécares, and Talamancas are short jackets, so narrow that they expose all the chest, (made) of tree bark which the Spaniards call *mastate*, and a sash of the same about six fingers wide and a yard and a half long, with which they cover their private parts; the women go about with a skirt of the same and some (are) of cotton which they tie (reaching) from the waist to the knees. . . .[79]

[TEXT CONTINUES BOTTOM OF P. 19(B)-ANALYST]

[78] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 501. ". . . y es de advertir que para sus trabajos y vivir en sus casas se visten de Cáscaras de palo llamado en estas tierras Mastate, y sólo para ir á Misa ó ponerse en la presencia del Padre se visten de algodón."

[79] Fernández, 1886, vol. V, p. 373. "Los vestidos de Urinamas, Cavécares y Talamancas son unas almillas cortas y tan angostas que descubren todo el pecho, de corteza de árbol que llaman los españoles *mastate*, y una banda de lo mismo como de seis dedos de ancha

Ujarrás, and China Kichá, the hearth is more often constructed of clay on a wooden table. Here wooden beds and mezzanines made of wooden rods are used for sleeping along with hammocks. Plates, spoons, cups, etc., are seen in every household although their number is limited according to the family purse. The low stool is always present but a chair and a table are found now and then. Hanging shelves serve for storing food and all manner of odds and ends. Yeast for chicha, generally wrapped in *bijagua* leaves, is hung on the wall posts. The fondness for decorating the wall with feathers, eggshells, bones, and skins, however, remains the same as on the Caribbean side. Attached to the exterior of the house are hen's nests made of vine baskets or *havas*, a wild plant or orchid, and generally a piece of tree trunk containing wild bees.

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

An early report concerning the expedition of Fray Margil to the Province of Talamanca states:

> Their dress is very poor, because the men (are dressed) with their cloth of skins, and the women with their short cloths, and those who do not have them, with plantain leaves appear as contented as the best dressed Spaniards.[80]

Today, bark cloth (*see* Manufactures and Trade), still called *mastate* in Spanish, is used in upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó as shirts or Mother Hubbards, as loin cloths, and as bed covering. In the rest of the area inhabited by the Talamancas, it is only used as blankets. Sewing is done by both men and women but chiefly by the men.

The ordinary woman's garment consists of

y vara y medio de largo, con que cubren las partes de honestidad; las mujeres andan con una manta de lo mismo y algunas de algodón que la atan desde la cintura a las rodillas. . . ."

[80] De Espinosa, 1742, p. 64. "Su vestir es pobrisimo, porq los hombres con sus cendales de pieles, y las mujeres con sus pañalitos cortos, y las que no los tienen, con hojas de platanos se hallan tan contentos como los mas bien vestidos Españoles."

[P. 23(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Bribri Cabecar

286 nique. Very seldom does one see bags woven from cotton or *guaruma* fiber. This last is found among the Cabécares, particularly on the Pacific side.

286 There are two types of weaving, single or double loop.[89] Those for ordinary purposes are single looped and are generally made with the fingers alone, although at times a bone needle is used to open the hole. The fine meshes, however, are made with needles of *pejibaye* thorns, and those a bit coarser with needles of deer or monkey bones. The coarse bags are always plain and undyed. The better ones, however, are decorated with horizontal bands of red-brown, yellow, and black. (*see* Dyes).

285 **Baskets.** *Havas* or carrying baskets are made by men from vines (*bejuco de hierro*) and are suspended down the back by a tumpline. Baskets for household use only are fashioned from the vein of the white *bijugua* leaf or from palm leaves or cane. Crudely made vine basket-nets are used for setting hens and hung on the outer walls of the houses.

386 **Dyes.** Red dye for decorating net bags is obtained from the leaves of a vine (*Arrabidae chica* [H. & B.] Verl.)[90] and by rubbing the leaf of *Melastomaceae* sp. A darker red or purple-red comes from the leaf of the red *higuerilla* (*Ricinus communis* L.). On the Pacific side, yellow is made from the bulb of the *yuquilla* (*Curcuma longa* L.), whereas in the Talamanca region it is extracted from a vine called *skəbarko* in Bribri. Black is made by rubbing with *ojo de buey* (*Mucuna mutisiana* D.C.), and in Cabécar it is obtained from a leaf called *səkíbəL*. This must be mashed and rubbed dry on the fiber because if wet, it is ineffective.

352 **Hammocks.** Hammocks are made principally by Bribri men from *cabuya* thread although *pita* is also used (*see* Fibers), and occasionally by the Cabécares from bark cloth (*see* Bark Cloth). There are two sizes of Bribri hammocks. The largest one is generally used by the Bribri themselves and the smaller one,

[89] Skinner, 1920, pp. 58–62, gives a detailed description of these weaves.

[90] This is also used in the interior of South America.

[91] Gabb, 1875, pp. 511–12.

352 sufficient for an adult to sit in, is an important item of trade. They are found in Cabécar, Térraba, and Boruca households (*see* Trade).

286 [177] **Weaving.** The art of weaving was possibly borrowed by the Bribri from other cultures. It is practically non-existent today and does not appear to have been practised by the Cabécares in historical times. Gabb [91] gives a detailed account of the technique and mentions belts, burial cloths for bones, breechcloths, and "women's petticoats." Undoubtedly, skirts are meant and not underwear. Skinner cites headbands and blankets.[92] The only evidence of actual Bribri weaving known to the writer are belts, made by some men on the upper Lari and at Cabagra, and four skirts, made by women who claim to have been taught by the Borucas. The Bribri weave is distinguished by its coarseness. The decoration [531] of the skirts consists of wide brown and white stripes which suggest a relationship with that of the Borucas.

415 824 **Gourds.** Gourds are employed as water jars, containers, and cups for liquids of any kind; as receptacles, often with a *pita* handle for hanging on the wall; for carrying seeds when planting; and as sieves, in particular for making [252] *pejibaye* flour. Pieces of gourds are sometimes [264] used as spoons to dish out food and occa- [534] sionally to eat with. Rattles are also made.

The gourds are generally plain, and when [531] decorated, the designs are crude cuts or child-like drawings. The holes in the sieves are made with a metal point attached to a wooden [322] handle.

323 **Pottery.** Today, only in the region of the upper Lari is there any attempt at pottery making. Here the Bribri are said still to fashion the large clay chicha jars seen in the round houses (*see* Furnishings; fig. 4, *c*) by coiling. This process is described in detail by Skinner.[93] 273 Chicha is generally kept in leaf-lined *havas* or in large wooden troughs.

501 824 **Canoes.** The Talamanca Bribri are the only people to make canoes. Cedar, *espavel* (*Ana-*

[91] Skinner, 1920, pp. 77–78. The writer has a large brown and white blanket made by the Bribri men about 1900.

[92] Skinner, 1920, pp. 67–68.

[P. 43(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

756 a staff of *cacique* wood either by finding one in the forest, by purchasing one from a medicine man, or by receiving one as a gift. This [787] is extremely important because without a staff [776] contact with the spirit, *duLør*, the messenger of *sibu*, cannot be made. Only full-fledged medicine men can talk to *duLør*, but the aspirant must see him alone in the forest with his staff. All claim that this is the worst experience during training as one must be absolutely isolated in the dark in deep forest land. Bit [787] by bit one can feel *duLør* approach. It is then that the novice receives a spirit, taken from someone long dead, to protect him.

The final or initiation ceremony takes place both inside and outside the house of the teacher, and is in truth a trial of endurance. The writer had a chance to witness such an event. The affair began at night and there were five medicine men taking part. A small room of palmito leaves had been built in a corner of the main house by and for the aspirant. This kind of leaf is not essential as banana or plantain can be used. There were two rows of leaves divided by a horizontally placed stick tied at the corners.

In the main room, the chief medicine man, singing and holding his staff, handed, one at a time, the feathers of the macaw, oriole, eagle, [825] quetzal, blue bird (Blue Tanager: *Thraupis Episcopus Diaconus* Lessom), hawk, paraquet, and parrot to the novice who also had his own staff. The young man took the feathers and tied them with a homemade cotton thread to a piece of rolled cloth. All the medicine men held staffs, and during the tying process, one sang to the aspirant while the rest sang to the witnesses who had to answer the song by saying "*ékéké*" (good).

When this was finished, the medicine men sat with their staffs over their shoulders on a ●[352] low, long bench called by the special name of *sią́kure*, because on top of it the stones were later placed. The chief sang to one assistant over a small basket, called *sią́bko*, which held the stones. These were wrapped in cotton inside two little *mochillas* or carrying bags. He took them out and gave the basket to the novice who promptly put the feathers in it. The singing continued, interspersed with joking between the medicine men.

[352] On a low, four-legged stool or bench the

756 head man placed five folded carrying bags,
●[352] one with a stone inside belonging to the novice; a paper package; two stones; and the basket with the feathers. These stones were not part of the *sią́* and were handed to the chief medicine man by his wife. As each object was put on the bench, every medicine man and the aspirant had to put a hand on it. The principal medicine man took the basket and put it first on the stool and then on the earthen floor of the house and announced that it was time to rest. All got up.

At this point, the first wife of the head man handed him a gourd lined with banana leaves and filled with hot chocolate (unsweetened). He took it and all left the main house, singing, and went to a smaller one where there was a kitchen. There they said to two women who were cooking by the fire, "*ịẹkeʒichərką́*" (here many people do not fit), and "*sią́ tsurú ibaų sią́*" (*sią́* chocolate heat for *sią́*).

[824] Then they took a pile of *bijagua* (*Calathea insignis* Petersen) leaves from a *tabanco* and brought it to the first house saying, "*ʒəbi* (this stands for *sią́*) *dibaLa* (chocolate hot; if *ʒəbi* were not before this word, it would mean water hot, but the name for the stones changes the meaning) *meką* (put)." This is a phrase used ceremoniously. Freely translated it signifies, "They are going to heat chocolate for *ʒəbi*."

The witnesses answered, "*ékéké*" (good).

The medicine men brought in the chocolate in an iron pot and placed it on the floor beside the bench with the stones, another bunch of leaves, and leaf-wrapped packages of white maize chicha. The *bijaguas* were to be used as cups for the chocolate. They said to those present, "Wait. We are going to serve the feast." All replied, "Good."

They brought in more leaves and a child came with water in a gourd. This was immediately taken by a medicine man and was placed on leaves on the floor beside the bench.

The first wife of the head medicine man and another woman sat on a long bench. They were to serve the feast. All women who participate in this ceremony must be old or at
[887] least middle-aged. The men sat opposite on another long bench and the chief one began to chant, "*mi̱kadioʒək*" (let's drink this). Each medicine man, always holding his staff and

756 [787] sign and that the novice would turn out to be a good curer.

After the fanning, the group returned to the main house and once more partook of the chocolate, food, and chicha. This time the aspirant took the place of the medicine man who passed the cups and was coached by the chief man.

The head man took a piece of cotton and picked up the pebblelike stones of the aspirant and sung over them. He wrapped them in cotton and put them in a small carrying bag with the largest of the stones on top. He placed this carrying bag in a bigger one and tied it up for the novice. He took another bag and lectured over it to one of the medicine men and then put it around his own neck. The other *jeuú* picked up his stones and put them in the two carrying bags from whence they had come, while the chief man did the same with the stones of the others. Finally, he hung the bag belonging to the aspirant around the latter's neck.

[824] A medicine man, acting as assistant, brought the head man five leaves of *poró-poró* (*Cochlospermum vitifolium* [Willd.] Spreng.) who shaped one of them into a cup and put it on the small bench. He put a pinch of Honduras bark, *cáscara amarga* (*Sweetia panamensis* Benth.), on each of the other leaves piling them on top of one another. The rest of the medicine he tied up in a leaf and gave to the aspirant who put it in a carrying bag hanging on the wall. Both then moved to the entrance of the house and the novice went outside. The chief man poured water from a small special gourd into the *poró-poró* cup and the novice had to mix the bark from one of the leaves in it and wash out his mouth. This had to be repeated until the contents of each leaf was used. The medicine left in the carrying bag was to be used in the same way after four days, with the chief medicine man present. On that occasion, the new doctor must talk to the stones also.

When the mouth washing was over, the head man took the carrying bag of the novice from the wall and put it over the latter's shoulder so that it hung down his right side. He proceeded to give the young man two [352] new low benches made of white balsa wood and a white blanket which he wrapped around

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P. 46(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

756 him. Both benches had four feet, but one had
[352] a protruding tail and head with a red spot.
[532] The two men then went outside and the chief doctor closed the door to keep others away. From within, one could hear the elder man's voice in a song which gradually became louder and louder.

According to custom, they sat on benches in front of the house and the head man sang to the novice. Two of the assistant medicine men went out to watch for the sunrise so that they could warn the chief that it was time to put the novice back in the hut.

When they came in, the aspirant took off his white blanket. The head medicine man took the feathers from the first carrying bag which was still on the low bench, some stones, a staff,
[534] a jaguar skin, a long reed flute (*kuLu*) which only the medicine men can make and put these things in the leaf room. The two new benches were not included. Then the head man entered with the aspirant to arrange the details. When he came out, he said to the novice who remained inside, "You do not have permission to sleep, not even a little."

The aspirant had to stay in the room all the following day without sleeping because to be a doctor he must show his power of self control. In fact, this endurance test was explained by a simple question: if a medicine man were to have a very sick patient and fell asleep, what would happen?

The drinks and food were now passed for the fourth time with the same ceremony as
[534] before. Then the head man blew a conch-shell horn right by the novice's wall and pushed the leaves. This was to be certain that he was not dozing. The aspirant was forbidden to talk, but he answered by blowing at times a conch-shell horn and at others a flute. Every now and then the other medicine men would poke their staffs at the wall and receive a blown attestation of his wakefulness or a knock. This continued throughout the day.

At night the ordeal ended and the novice could leave his leaf compartment and take his stones. However, he had to wait four days before he could finish the mouth-washing ceremony and become in truth a *jawá*.

758 **Sickness.** On the Caribbean side, but less often on the Pacific, a lean-to for a sick person is made of *pejibaye* leaves at one end of the